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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2018  
TAGS: [UNESCO PREL](#) [PINR](#) [SL](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL ELECTION  
REF: STATE 130915

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JUNE CARTER PERRY, REASONS 1.4 b and d

¶1. (C) Ambassador reviewed fully the candidacy of Egyptian Culture Minister Hosni for the post of UNESCO Director General with Acting Foreign Minister Vandi Minah on 12/18.

¶2. (C) Minah was attentive to our concerns, especially the issue of a stymied free press or burning of books. The idea of a cultural straitjacket approach at UNESCO's helm seemed to strike a nerve with Minah, a reserved attorney. He understood that Egypt was expected to press hard for Hosni at the January 2009 AU Summit.

¶3. (C) We emphasized that Sierra Leone and other AU Member states deserved the opportunity to study the full field of candidates before making a decision. We pointed out that the election is not until May 31, 2009 so there is no need to rush. Minah agreed that the length of time between the summit and the election would be a useful period for further reflection.

¶4. (C) Comment: The A/FoMin did not make a commitment to fully resist Egyptian advances. However, he is a thoughtful, serious technocrat who sees the logic of our argument. The GoSL's final foreign policy decisions are, in the end, made by the forceful Foreign Minister, Zainab Bangura, who is currently out of the country. Also, the Egyptian relationship with Sierra Leone seems a comfortable, mutually-agreeable one. Given these considerations, it is our belief that we will need to continue engaging the GoSL on a regular basis before the AU Summit. The Egyptians will be charming their way into the FoMin's and the President's good graces to achieve their goal. End comment.  
PERRY